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STATE OF CONNECTICUT



**2004 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Professional Telephone Soliciting for**  
**Charity, Police and Firefighter Groups**

**Edwin R. Rodriguez**  
**Commissioner of Consumer Protection**

**Richard Blumenthal**  
**Attorney General**

*October 2005*

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**Connecticut Groups Received \$3.31 Million of \$10.1 Million Raised in Their Name by Paid Telephone Solicitors**

This report highlights Connecticut's 18<sup>th</sup> annual telephone solicitation survey.

The state's Public Charities Unit, operated jointly by the offices of Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and Consumer Protection Commissioner Edwin R. Rodriguez, compiled the report, which shows that 130 Connecticut organizations hired commercial telemarketing companies to conduct 138 telephone solicitation campaigns during 2004..

Telephone solicitors hired by Connecticut civic, charitable and public safety organizations raised \$10.1 million in 2004. This total is higher than last year, but still below the 18-year average of \$11.5 million, adjusted for inflation.

The percentage of donations contributed through paid solicitors in 2004 increased at a greater rate than the amount passed on to charities. Paid solicitors turned over 32.8 percent – \$3.31 million – to charitable groups that hired them, down from last year's record 35.52 percent.

The percentage of donations passed on to charitable and public safety organizations had been rising steadily since the state's first annual survey in 1987. The almost 3 percent drop in the amount charities received this year as compared to last year is disappointing. It shows that those charities which negotiate contracts with paid solicitors

can and should demand a higher percentage of the donations.

The decreasing percentage means less money for the charitable organizations. They collected about \$275,000 less this year than they would have if the percentage had remained the same.

The survey also includes data on 167 charitable organizations – most out of state – that solicited by telephone in Connecticut as part of a multi-state fundraising campaign. These groups are not required to provide a breakdown of donations by Connecticut residents, so figures in this report are national totals.

A review of these multi-state campaigns reveals that public safety organizations (police, fire and emergency services) received just 12.6 percent of the proceeds, an extraordinarily low percentage. The 10 public safety charities that hired companies to solicit Connecticut residents by phone as part of a multi-state campaign collected just \$786,342 of the \$6.2 million raised. In contrast, 107 Connecticut-based public safety-related charities did better, receiving \$2.59 million, or 31.05 percent, of the \$8.2 million raised in their names. However, even the Connecticut-based public safety charities did not do as well as the 34.07 percent they received last year.

Blumenthal and Rodriguez advise Connecticut consumers to be cautious of public safety groups conducting a multi-state campaign. Consumers should research as much as possible before giving to such an organization.

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**2004 Summary**

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**\$10,099,654 contributed through paid solicitors to Connecticut groups.**

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**32.80 percent of money contributed to Connecticut groups reached the intended beneficiaries, a drop from last year.**

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**130 Connecticut groups used paid soliciting firms, 108 of which were public safety related such as police and firefighter groups.**

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**Multi-state public safety-related groups received only 12.6 percent of money donated, Connecticut public safety related groups received 31.05 percent.**

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The survey covers campaigns that ended between January 2004 and December 2004. The names of those organizations and their paid solicitors are listed in Table D.

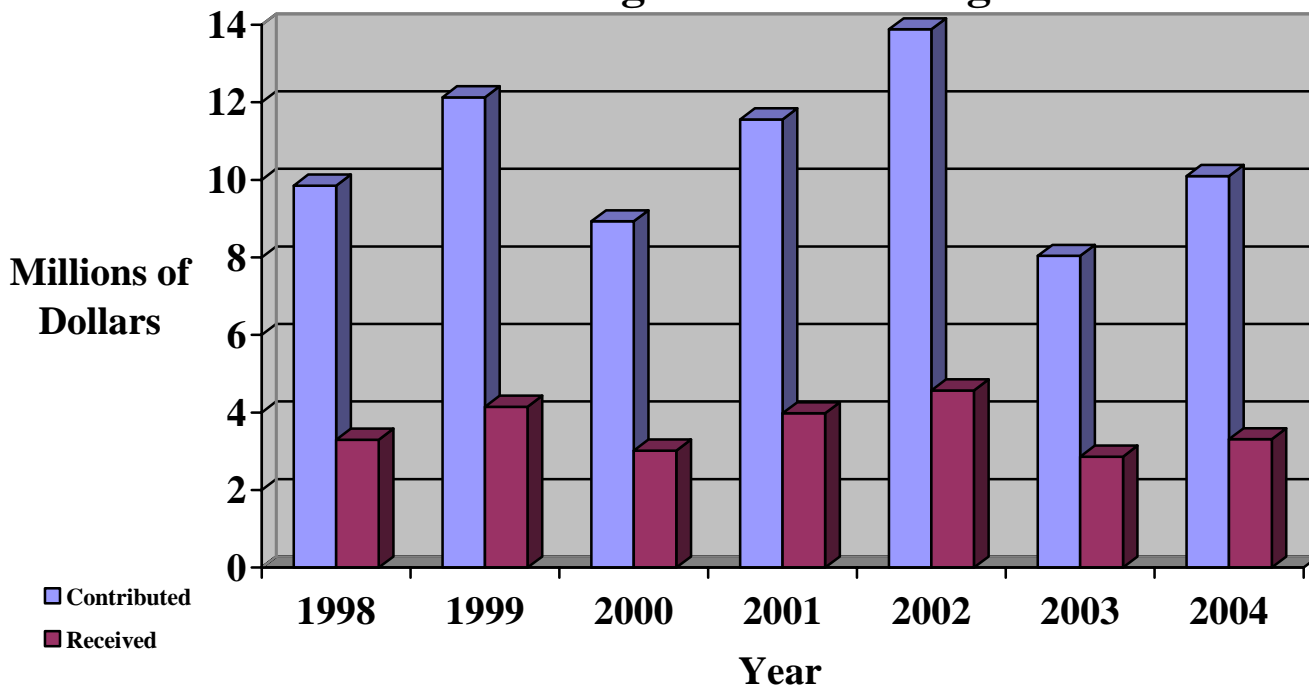
The report is based on data from financial reports that paid soliciting firms must file with the Public Charities Unit at the close of each

fundraising campaign. The reports disclose the amount contributed, fees and other costs and the total received by the charitable, civic or public safety organization. These organizations must certify the accuracy of these financial reports.

As displayed in the graph below, annual, inflation-adjusted totals

raised by Connecticut organizations through paid solicitors have ranged in recent years from \$8 million in 2003 to \$14 million in 2002. The survey does not factor the value of increased name recognition, public awareness or other non-cash benefits that an organization may receive from a paid solicitation campaign.

## Amounts Contributed And Received By Connecticut Organizations Using Paid Solicitors



Below are tips to help the public avoid unscrupulous telephone solicitors, developed by the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance – a merger of the National Charities Information Bureau and the Council of Better Business Bureaus' Foundation and its Philanthropic Advisory Service.

1. DO NOT succumb to pressure to make an immediate gift. A legitimate charity that wants your donation will welcome it just as much tomorrow or next week. Report harassing calls to your state's attorney general's office and to the Better Business Bureau in your area.
2. DO NOT give your credit card number, bank account number, or other personal financial information to unknown solicitors. If you want to contribute, mail a check to the organization's address after checking out the charity.
3. DO NOT hesitate to seek out additional facts. If you receive a telephone appeal from an unfamiliar charity, ask the solicitor to mail you information on the charity's programs, finances, and/or a copy of their latest financial statements.
4. ASK HOW MUCH THE CHARITY SPENT ON FUND RAISING IN THE PAST YEAR as a portion of total contributions received. The Alliance recognizes that the cost of an individual fund raising campaign using the telephone may exceed donor expectations for the use of funds. On an annual basis, however, the voluntary Alliance charity standards recommend that total fund raising costs should not exceed 35% of total related contributions.
5. WATCH OUT FOR NAME SIMILARITY. In view of the volume of charities (more than 850,000 organizations have received charitable tax exempt status from the IRS), there are many organizations raising money for the same cause. Unfortunately, some names are used as to confuse potential donors and sound similar to well-known organizations.
6. IF A POLICE OR FIREFIGHTER ORGANIZATION is using the telephone to solicit funds, ask what type of organization is soliciting (e.g., charity, fraternal group or union), if

any local police officers or firefighters are involved, and what specific program(s) will the donation support? For additional advice on police and firefighter organizations, go to [www.give.org/tips/policefire.asp](http://www.give.org/tips/policefire.asp)

7. CHECK OUT THE CHARITY with the BBB Wise Giving Alliance ([www.give.org](http://www.give.org)) to find out if a national charity meets the 20 voluntary Alliance charity standards, with the local Better Business Bureau

([www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)), if the inquiry is about a local charity, and with your state's charity registration office (usually a division of the state attorney general's office).

## Charity Information Resource Guide

There is additional information available to help you be a discerning donor:

There are more than 8,500 organizations on file with the Public Charities Unit able to solicit funds in Connecticut. They include charitable, civic, police and firefighter groups. About 4,100 of these organizations are required to file financial reports annually. Religious organizations, hospitals, educational institutions, government-affiliated organizations and organizations that normally raise less than \$50,000 per year are not required to file financial reports. The report contains information on income and expenses and a brief description of the organization's programs. The Public Charities Unit prepares a summary of

each financial report. To obtain a summary of the financial report or a copy of a complete financial report for a particular organization, write or call:

**Public Charities Unit**  
**c/o Office of the Attorney General**  
**55 Elm Street**  
**P.O. Box 120**  
**Hartford, CT 06141-0120**  
**(860) 808-5030**

or you may contact us at our web sites:  
<http://www.cslib.org/attygenl>  
<http://www.state.ct.us/dcp>

There are two private watchdog organizations that evaluate the performance of larger, national charities. To obtain further information, contact:

**BBB Wise Giving Alliance**  
**4200 Wilson Boulevard**  
**Arlington, VA 22203**  
**(703) 276-0100**  
<http://www.give.org>

**American Institute of Philanthropy**  
**3450 Lake Shore Drive**  
**P.O. Box 578460**  
**Chicago, IL 60657**  
**(773) 529-2300**  
<http://www.charitywatch.org>

In addition, the **Philanthropic Research Institute** has a searchable database of over 850,000 charities and other nonprofit organizations. You can access the images of financial reports the organizations file with the Internal Revenue Service. Its Web address is: [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

## Guide to Survey Tables

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